

# JOAN OF THE SWORD HAND

By S. R. CROCKETT, Author of *The Raiders*, etc.  
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## CHAPTER III.

### Joan Draws First Blood.

The word of command came full and strong from the open doorway of the hall.

Hans Trenck came instantly to the salute with the ball in his hand. He had no difficulty in lifting it now. In fact, he did not seem able to let it down. Every man in the hall except the two captains of Plassenburg had risen to his feet and stood as if carved in marble.

For there in the doorway, her slim figure, erect and exceedingly commanding, and her beautiful eyes shining with indignation, stood the Duchess Joan of Hohenstein.

In stern silence she advanced into the hall, every man standing fixed at attention.

"Keep your hand so, Hans Trenck," said their mistress, "give me your sword, Werner! You shall see whether I am called Joan of the Sword for naught. You would torture prisoners, would you, after what I have said? Hold up, I say, Hans Trenck!"

And so, no man saying her nay, the girl took the shining blade and, with a preliminary swish through the air and a balancing shake to feel the elastic return, she looked at the poor knave fixed before her in the center of the hall with his wrist strained to hold the prisoner's ball aloft at the stretch of his arm. What wonder if it wavered like a branch in an unsteady wind?

"Steady, there!" said Joan. And she drew back her arm for the stroke.

The young Dane, who, since her entrance, had looked at nothing save the radiant beauty of the figure before him, now cried out, "For heaven's sake, lady, do not soil the skirts of your dress with his villain blood. He but obeyed his orders. Let me be set free, and I will fight him or any man in the castle. And if I am beaten, let them torture me till I am carried off to be thrown into the castle ditch."

The duchess paused and leaned on the sword, holding it point to the earth.

"By whose orders was this thing done?" she demanded.

"By mine, my lady!" said Werner von Orseln, a deep flush upon his manly brow.

The girl looked severely at him. She seemed to waver. "Good, then!" she said, "the Dane shall fight Werner for his life. Loose him and chafe his wrists. Ho! there—bring a dozen swords from the armory!"

The flush was now rising to the boy's cheek.

"I thank you, duchess," he said. "I ask no more than this."

"Out into the light!" cried the young Duchess Joan, pointing the way with Werner's sword, which she still held in her hand. And going first she went forth from the hall of the soldiery, down the broad stairs, and soon through a low-arched door with a sculptured coat-of-arms over it, out into the quadrangle of the courtyard.

Werner followed unwillingly and with a deep flush of shame upon his brow.

Meanwhile the lad had been freed from his bonds and stood, with a sword in his hand suppling himself for the work before him with quick little guards and feints and attacks. There was a proud look in his eyes, and as his glance left the duchess and roved round the circle of his foes it flashed full, bold and defiant.

Werner turned to a pallid, lean Bohemian who stood a little apart.

"Peter Balta," he said, "will you be

"Had this Dane and our Joan been brother and sister, they could not have favored each other more," they said.

A deep blush rose to the youth's swarthy face.

"I am not worthy," he said, and kept his eyes upon the lithe figure of the girl in its array of well fitting green. "I cannot thank you!" he said again.

"Tut," she answered, "worthy—unworthy—thank—unthank—what avail these upon the mountains of Kernsberg and in the castle of Joan of the Sword? A good heart, a merry fight, a quick death! These are more to the purpose than many thanks and compliments. Peter Balta, are you seconding Werner? Come hither. Let us try the sword. Will not these two serve? Guard! Well smitten! There, enough. What, you are touched on the sword arm? Faith, man, for the moment I forgot that it was not you and I who were to drum. Now, then, Maurice von Lynar—Werner. At the salute! Ready! Fall to!"

"I give the Sparhawk five minutes," said Boris to Jorian, after the first pass. It was little more than formal and gave no token of what was to follow. Yet for full twenty minutes Werner von Orseln, the oldest swordsman of all the north, from the marshes of Wilna to the hills of Silesia, could do nothing but stand on the defensive, so fierce and incessant were the attacks of the young Dane.

"The Kernsberger is playing with him!" said Boris, under his breath. Jorian nodded. He had no breath to waste.

"But he is not going to kill him. He has not the Death in his eye!" Boris spoke with judgment, for so it proved. Werner lifted an eyebrow for the fraction of a second toward his mistress. And then at the end of the next rally his sword just touched the young adversary on the shoulder and the blood answered the thrust, staining the white under-doublet of the Dane.

Then Werner threw down his sword and held out his hand.

"A well fought rally," he said, "let us be friends. We need lads of such mettle to ride the forays from the hills of Kernsberg. I am sorry I batted you, Sparhawk!"

"A good fight clears all," replied the youth, smiling in his turn.

"Bring a bandage for his shoulder, Peter Balta!" cried Joan. "Mine was the cleaner stroke which went through your great muscle, but Werner's is somewhat the deeper. You can keep each other company at the dice box these next days. And, as I warrant neither of you has a Lubeck guildler to bless yourselves with, you can even play for love till you wear out the pips with throwing."

"Then I am not to go back to the dungeon?" said the lad, one reason of whose wounding had been that he also lifted his eyes for a moment to those of his second.

"To prison—no," said Joan, "you are one of us now. We have blooded you. Do you take service with me?"

"I have no choice—your father left me none!" the lad replied, quickly altering his phrase. "Castle Lynar is no more. My grandfather, my mother and my uncles are all dead, and there is small service in going back to Denmark where there are more than enough of hungry gentlemen with no wealth but their swords and no living but their gentility. If you will let me serve in the ranks, Duchess Joan, I shall be well content!"

"I also," said Joan heartily. "We are all free in Kernsberg, even if we are not all equal. We will try you in the ranks first."

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Cozening of the Ambassador.

The next moment Joan had disappeared, and when she was seen again she had assumed the skirt she had previously worn over her dress of forestier, and was again the sedate lady of the castle, ready to lead the dance, grace the banquet, or entertain the High State's Councillor of Plassenburg, Leopold von Dessauer.

But when she went upstairs she met on the middle flight a grey-bearded man with a skull cap of black velvet upon his head. His dress also was of black, of a distinguishing plain richness and dignity.

"Whither away, Ambassador?" she cried gaily at sight of him.

"To see your principal's wound and that of the other whom your sword countered in a trial bout!"

"What? You saw?" said the duchess, with a quick flush.

"I am indeed privileged not to be blind," said Dessauer, "and never did I see a sight that contented me more. I am an old man, and I have seen many fair women, many sweet princesses, each perfect to their lovers, some of them even perfect to their lords. But I have never before seen a Duchess Joan of Hohenstein."

"Ambassador," cried the girl, "if you speak thus and without that flash of the eye, I shall have to bethink me whether you come not as an ambassador for your own cause. You are the only man I ever met who can speak of love and yet be tolerable. It is a pity that my father left me the evil heritage that I must wed the Prince of Courtland or lose my dominions!"

At the sound of the name of her predestined husband a sudden flashing thought seemed to wake in the girl's breast.

"My lord," she said, "is it true that you go to Courtland after leaving our poor eagle's nest up here on the cliffs of the Kernsberg?"

Von Dessauer bowed, smiling at her.

Joan of the Sword clasped her hands and drew a long breath. "I would not ask of any man in the world but yourself," she said, "but will you let me go with you?"

A shade of anxiety passed over Dessauer's countenance. "My lady," he answered, "you let me use many freedoms of speech with you. It is the privilege of age and frailty. But let me tell you that the thing is plainly foolish."

"Well, I am coming, at any rate!" said Joan, as usual rejecting argument and falling back upon assertion.

"Make your count with that, friend of mine, whether you are shocked or no. It is the penalty a respectable diplomatist has to pay for cultivating the friendship of lone females like Joan of Hohenstein."

Von Dessauer held up his hands in horror that was more than half affected.

"My girl," he said, "I might be your grandfather, it is true, but do not remind me of it too often. But if I were your great-great-grandfather the thing you propose is still impossible."



"At the point of her rapier!"

Shall the future Princess of Courtland and Wilna ride in the train of an ambassador of Plassenburg to the palace in which she is soon to reign as queen?

"I said not that I would go as the duchess," said Joan, speaking low. "If you will not have the Duchess Joan von Hohenstein, what say you to the Sparhawk's second, Johann the Square?"

Dessauer started.

"You dare not," he said, "why, there is not a lady in the German land, from Bohemia to the Baltic, that dares do as much."

"Ladies—I am sick for ever of hearing that a lady must not do this or that, go here or there, because of her so fragile reputation. I care for my own. I need none to take up my quarrel. If any have a word to say upon the repute of Joan of the Sword—why, let him say it at the point of her rapier!"

Dessauer stood wavering. With quick tact she altered her tone, and with a soft accent and in a melting voice she said, "Ah, let me come. I will make such a creditable squirrel all in a suit of blue and silver, with just a touch of a purple upon my face that my old nurse knows the secret of."

Von Dessauer capitulated. "A wilful woman," he smiled—"a wilful, wilful woman. Well, I am not responsible for aught of this, save for my own weakness in permitting it. It is a madcap freak, and no good will come of it."

"But you will like it!" she said. "Oh, yes, you will like it very much. For, you see, you are fond of madcaps." (To be continued.)

### Be Original.

Do not be afraid of being original, even eccentric. Be an independent, self-reliant, new man, not just one more individual in the world. Do not be a copy of your grandfather, of your father, or of your neighbor. That is as foolish as for a violet to try to be like a rose, or for a daisy to ape a sunflower. Nature has given each a peculiar equipment for its purpose. Every man is born to do a certain work in an original way. If he tries to copy some other man, or to do some other man's work, he will be an abortion, a misfit, a failure.

Do not imitate even your heroes. Scores of young clergymen attempted to make their reputations by imitating Beecher. They copied his voice and conversation, and imitated his gestures and his habits, but they fell as far short of the great man's power as the chrono falls short of the masterpiece. Where are those hundreds of imitators now? Not one of them has ever made any stir in the world. Success.

### Invariable Rules of Growth.

"We grow at a uniform rate," said a physician. "There are rules of growth that, unconsciously we all obey."

"Take the average man. He grows as follows:

"First year, eight inches; second year, six inches; third year, five inches; fourth year, four inches; fifth year, four inches; sixth year, four inches. From the sixth year on the growth is slower until the sixteenth year it is only one and one-half inches a year. The seventeenth year has a growth of two inches. The eighteenth year has a growth of one inch."

"At 18 the average man is 5 feet 8 inches high. Thereafter he grows no more."

## "COON" LOCKED IN ICEBOX; LIKE ICICLE WHEN RESCUED

Terrible Experience of Colored Porter of a New York Hotel—Finally Saved by His Congealed Think Tank.

New York.—Alexander Beck, bar porter of the Marlborough hotel, spent all his spare time the other day wherever he could find the most sunshine, and in the meantime as he went about his duties his joints creaked and rasped like the rusty hinges of a door.

All that was because Beck is not yet thawed out. It will be several days, he thinks, before his arteries and veins are running unclogged by floating ice and the dampness gets out of his bones and sockets. He was almost frozen to death the day before, and had it not been for a frapped presence of mind that came to him in the last extremity he might have been entirely frozen.

His duties are many and various. It is he who must keep the barkeepers supplied with everything they need in the compounding of the drinking called for by the patrons. He must never allow the ice bins to become empty, the mint to become exhausted or the cherries and other fruit to be wanting, while the lemon juice bottle is a particular charge of his. He usually works below stairs and appears and disappears at intervals.

He does his principal work shifting the beer kegs, watching the mineral waters, stirring up the fruits and managing the straws and other things in the refrigerator. It is there also he keeps his lemons, and to save time, it is there he squeezes them. The Marlborough cold room is on under the sidewalk, and a narrow passage leads to its heavy wood and iron door, two feet thick. It is a massive room all around, stored with casks and crates, with the pipes coated with about six inches of snow running in all directions. The temperature is kept around freezing all the time, and about ten minutes is enough of it for Beck ordinarily. Then he goes out and exercises.

Beck went in there to squeeze the lemons, and was peacefully engaged in the process when a watchman came along through the underground labyrinth. Beck had left the massive door just on the crack, but the rays of the electric light he used did not come through. The watchman saw only that the door was not shut, and muttering something about carelessness, slammed it and threw the lock over.

Beck was a prisoner. Unless somebody came to open the door he would remain one, for kicks, shouts, screams and everything else would avail nothing through those thick walls. He suddenly remembered that he had given the barkeepers above an extra supply, and they would not be down to look for him for hours. He looked at an ice-coated pole in the corner and thought what he would be then. He felt his body chilling gradually, and when a nervous perspiration came out on his forehead the drops fell on the floor like marbles. He tried to dance, but there was not room, so he practiced on juggling lemons. His

hands got so cold he could not tell when they touched him. He rolled a beer keg backward and forward, and that only made him colder. He saw some mint and when he thought of summer drinks his teeth began to chatter. He felt his feet growing numb, and after he had tried beating on the wall with his fists for a minute he stopped for fear he would break off a hand or a finger.

It seemed that about all in sight for him was a cold, cheerless exit, with a beer keg and a bag of lemons for his funeral catafalque. He sat down and tried to weep, but the icicles nearly blinded him. He was giving



He Was Fast Freezing to Death.

up in despair when he gave a shriek of delight. He remembered that the valves of the air pumps attached to the beer spigots of the bar were in the room. Giving a very good imitation of an arctic avalanche, he rolled over to the casks and grabbed the valves. When he turned around finally he had shut off every spigot in the floor above and then he sat down to wait.

He had not long to wait, for ten minutes later the manager came downstairs, with harsh words on his lips for the porter who would allow the air to run out of the pumps. Not finding the pumps, he opened the valve himself, and the next minute he was carrying Beck out into the open air. He had been in that room a little more than an hour, according to estimates.

He was at once thrown into a tub of ice water and by degrees melted enough to take a long breath and tell what had happened. It was feared he might receive an attack of pneumonia, but a physician said he had appeared to come through it all right except for the few traces of ice that lingered in the hollows and corners.

## RED JERSEY COW TURNS FAUCET WITH MOUTH TO GET A DRINK

Sagacious Oregon Animal Satisfies Her Thirst in Back Yard and Saves Long Walk to the River.

Portland, Ore.—The county poor farm has, according to the assertion of the inmates, the cleverest cow in the state. The animal is an old red Jersey that has been on the farm for years. The matron at the farm last



The Cow Turned the Faucet with Her Mouth.

summer discovered that the faucet on the hydrant in the back yard was frequently turned on, but constant watching failed to disclose the miscreant.

The same trouble occurred again this summer. The matron noticed the water was turned on about the same time every afternoon. While she watched she saw the old red Jersey come leisurely up the road, into the back yard and walk straight up to the hydrant. The cow pushed the faucet with her nose, but it did not seem to work. So she tried her

horns, and when that method failed, opened her mouth, took hold of the faucet and turned it.

Mrs. Bossey then drank her fill of cold water and turned away toward the green fields, evidently pleased that she did not have to go a quarter of a mile to the river to satisfy her thirst.

The next day the cow seemed much puzzled to find a new faucet and appeared dejected when after half an hour of hard work she could not get her drink. Then the matron had a watering place made and the cold water was allowed to run at all times.

### SIX GIRLS HIS PALLBEARERS.

Polish Society Leader Stipulated for Them in His Will.

Hartford, Conn.—Michael Wyler, a well to do machine builder, who died at the hospital here of typhoid fever, lived up to a reputation of being a social leader, which he had gained among the wealthy class of the Polish colony in this city, by stipulating in his will and last directions regarding his funeral that none but women pallbearers should carry his body to his last resting place. Following his wishes, six young ladies, among the prettiest in the Polish colony here, all attired in white, acted as pallbearers, and two others served as flower bearers.

### Horse a Good Dentist.

Chester, Pa.—Half crazed with pain from an aching tooth, and unable to get a dentist to extract the molar, Henry Wesley, a cook in Birch's restaurant, on Edgemont avenue, hit upon a novel plan to relieve his agony. He took a thin wire, fastened it around the tooth, tied the other end to the rear of his employer's delivery wagon, and yelled to Mike, the horse, to "Gid apl!" The tooth was pulled as well as any expert in dental surgery could have done it.

## FINAL EFFORT MADE FOR PEACE IN ISLANDS

The Cuban Government Has Been Thoroughly Aroused by Prospects of American Intervention.

Havana.—The government is making final strenuous efforts to restore peace in Cuba and thus avoid any kind of American intervention. The object of these endeavors, it is said, is that it may be able to say by the time Secretary of War Taft and Acting Secretary of State Bacon arrived that peace has already resulted; that therefore there is no need for American intervention, either to restore peace or to insure permanent tranquility.

It is claimed that they are making the efforts in accordance with the advice contained in President Roosevelt's letter; that they have no objection to the friendly assistance of the United States in the matter if it becomes necessary, but that they believe they can settle it between the government and revolutionists without the necessity of any intervention. At least, they say, they are making an attempt to accomplish their end unaided, and with fair prospects of success.

### BEACON LIGHT FOR OLD WORLD.

Monument to George Washington Unveiled at Budapest.

Budapest.—Sunday, September 16, was George Washington day in Hungary's capital, and the entire population, from morning until night, gave itself up to enthusiasm over the unveiling on monarchical territory of a monument to the first president of the United States. The stars and stripes and the Hungarian colors intertwined were to be seen everywhere. In the morning there were special sermons in many of the churches, the preachers calling attention to the importance of the event. In the afternoon thousands of persons lined the streets through which passed an imposing parade to the city park, which was surrounded by many thousands more. Francis Kossuth, Hungarian minister of commerce, and Count Albert Apponyi, minister of worship, represented the independence party at the ceremonies, and were not present in their capacity as government officials.

### HAD NARROW ESCAPE

Young Woman's Peculiar Escape From Death Which Claimed Comrades.

New York.—Miss Fannie Day, a young department store employee, who was one of eight persons in a naphtha launch which capsized in the lower bay Saturday, had a most remarkable escape from death. Three of her companions were drowned when the launch, with disabled engines, was run into by a mud scow. When nothing was seen of Miss Day for hours afterward it was reported that she met death. But when the mud scow had been towed nearly to its destination and the deck hands were adjusting the dumping apparatus, they were startled to find a handsomely dressed young woman in one of the pockets. Miss Day had been scooped out of the water by the dumping machinery which had been left open after the scow had discharged its load at sea.

### Pacific Mail Steamer Manchuria Is Finally Floated.

Honolulu.—The Pacific Mail company's steamship Manchuria, which went aground on Rabbit island, August 20, was successfully floated on Sunday and towed to this harbor by the tug Restorer. A great crowd of people watched the Manchuria being towed in. During the final efforts to pull the Manchuria off the reef several thousand bags of flour were jettisoned. These were washed ashore and picked up by natives.

### Man Shoots Himself Rather Than Undergo Operation for Appendicitis.

Oakland, Cal.—D. J. Powell, a real estate dealer of Fruitvale, committed suicide Sunday by shooting himself through the head. Business losses and a dread of an operation for appendicitis are believed to have been the cause. Mr. Powell chose the open streets as his place of death. He fired five shots, which aroused the neighborhood. His body was found on the sidewalk, with a revolver clutched in his hand.

### Town Damaged by Flood.

Jackson, Neb.—At 7:30 o'clock Sunday morning water from a cloudburst in the northwestern part of Dakota county and the eastern part of Dixon county rushed down the valley of Elk creek, sweeping away hundreds of tons of hay, drowning hogs caught in pens, flooding cellars, washing away railroad tracks, and doing other damage, all of which is conservative, estimated at \$100,000. The wave of water in the creek when it struck this town was seven feet high.

### Count Witte Is Annoyed.

Homburg.—Count Witte, ex-prime minister of Russia, who is being treated here for polypi of the nose, is much annoyed at the utterly untrue report published in the United States that an attempt was made on his life by an anarchist named Rosenberk at Soden Saturday. Count Witte is taking no precautions to guard against an attack, as he is not in fear of any one. He is out of Russian public life now, his friends say, and is not regarded as the object of a terrorist plot.



"A good fight clears all," replied the youth.

my second? Agreed! And who will care for my honorable opponent?"

"Do not trouble yourself—that will arrange itself!" said Joan to her chief captain.

With that she flashed lightfoot into one of the low doors which led into the flanking turrets of the quadrangle, and in a trice of seconds she was out again, in a forestier's dress of green doublet and broad pleated kirtle that came to her knee.

"I myself," she said, "will be this young man's second in this place where he has so many enemies and no friends."

As the forestier in green and the prisoner stood up together, the guards murmured in astonishment at the likeness between them.